

Remarks at Robinson Helicopter Company in Torrance, California

January 30, 2008

Thank you all. So my daughters are going to be envious I was introduced by Arnold. *[Laughter]* I appreciate you, Governor. Thanks for your strong leadership; thanks for your friendship. You know, California is a really important State for our country, and I think a lot of Californians appreciate the fact that you're steady at the helm. Thank you for having us.

Frank, thank you very much for your hospitality. Some say, "Why do you want to come to Robinson Helicopter Company?" Well, first, I love entrepreneurs and dreamers. And your boy told me that you dreamt about a company, and you started it in your kitchen. Isn't it interesting? The company was started in the kitchen, and now he's got the Terminator coming by to herald the success. *[Laughter]* I mean, this is—I love America, because we stand for dreams that can be accomplished.

And so the first reason I'm here is, I want to congratulate the Robinsons for living a dream and for giving people good work. Arnold and I had the pleasure of working the floor and shaking hands with people who are making a living for their families. And so you're building good helicopters, but more importantly, you're providing people a chance to work, and I appreciate that a lot.

The other reason I'm here is, I want to spend a little time talking about the economy and about what we can do to help in the short term and in the long term.

Before I do, I do want to also welcome Congresswoman Jane Harman. This is her district, and I'm proud to have traveled from Washington to California with her. Jane, thank you for coming; appreciate your time being here.

And Dreier and Royce are with us too, as well—that would be Congressman Dreier and Congressman Royce. I appreciate you all joining us; thank you for your time. Mayor, thanks for coming.

I hope you're confident about our economy. I am. We've got some short-term issues to deal with. Fourth quarter growth slowed to .6 percent. In other words, there are signs

that our economy are slowing. There's some uncertainty in the economy, but in the long run, you've got to be confident about your economy. Inflation is down; interest rates are low; productivity is high. Our economy is flexible; it is resilient. We've been through problems before. As a matter of fact, we've been through problems before since I was your President. We've had a recession, corporate scandals, an attack on the United States of America; we've had major national disasters. And every time, we've come through strong, and that what's going to happen this time too.

But the Federal Government can help. We can have some smart policy out of Washington. And the smartest thing we can do is to help deal with the uncertainty by putting about \$145 billion into your pockets so you can spend it, which will help this economy stay strong, and at the same time, part of that \$145 billion is to provide incentives for businesses, large and small, to invest. See, when you provide an incentive for a company to invest, they go out and buy a machine. And when they buy that machine, somebody has to put labor into the machine; somebody is working.

So the whole purpose of a stimulus package is to have something robust enough to make a difference, temporary enough that—so that we can balance our budget over time, and simple enough to be effective. And as the Governor mentioned, we reached an agreement with both Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives on a package that's simple, robust, and effective. And now the Senate is debating the issue. And I understand people having their points of view, and of course, we welcome points of view in Washington. There appears to be a lot of them up there. *[Laughter]*

But whatever the Senate does, they should not delay this package. They should not keep money out of your pocket. The sooner you get a check, the more likely it is that the stimulus package will kick in and make a difference. So my attitude is, if you're truly interested in dealing with the slowdown of the economy, the Senate ought to accept the House package, pass it, and get it to my desk as soon as possible. That's what I want to talk about.

I also want to talk about trade. Now, people in our country—let's be perfectly frank about it—you hear them say, trade isn't any good; it doesn't help. If I were a worker at Robinson, I'd be arguing against that. You've got good jobs here. People are working, and 70 percent of what you make gets sold overseas. So you can't tell the people at Robinson Helicopter that trade isn't good. When 70 percent of that which you manufacture gets sold somewhere else other than the United States, they ought to have a sign walking in here and say, trade is not only good, it is great, and we want the Federal Government to make it easier for us to sell products.

That's what trade is really about, isn't it? If you're good at something—and you're good at making helicopters—then you ought to have your Government making it easier to sell your product, not harder. Mr. Robinson said 70 percent of the revenues from his company are a result of products being sold overseas. And that happens in a lot of companies in America, by the way. As a matter of fact, it is estimated that our growth last year, a third of that growth was caused by exports. When people are selling something overseas, it means somebody is working. And there's a lot of customers overseas.

So one of the goals of this administration is to reduce trade barriers. The interesting thing about what I'm about to tell you on three free trade agreements that we're hoping Congress votes on here pretty soon is that we're not treated the same way. In other words, they got their goods and services coming to our country without a lot of tariffs. And when we're trying to sell into their countries, they're taxing it, which makes it much harder to sell.

Reasonable policy says to nations, you treat us the way we treat you. That's all we're asking for. We're saying to countries, if your goods and services are coming here—which, by the way, are good for our consumers; like if you're a consumer, you want a lot of choices, you want a lot of different options. But we want to be treated equally too. Good trade policy is fair trade policy.

And so these trade agreements I'm about to describe to you level the playing field. When I say level the playing field, it means we'll be treated equally. And that's impor-

tant, because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, just as long as the rules are fair. That's what I think. I think our workers are the best in the world. I said in the State of the Union the other night, let's open the—level the playing field, open up markets, so the best workers in the world can have the fruits of their labor sold overseas. And that's what trade is all about. You got people in this country saying, "Oh, trade doesn't matter." I'm telling you it matters. It matters to our economy, and it matters to the jobs right here at Robinson Manufacturer—Robinson Helicopter.

The other interesting thing about trade is, if you're working for a company that's selling goods overseas, you're likely to be paid higher wages. Trade yields better pay.

So what are you going to do about it, Mr. President? It's one thing to talk about the benefits of trade. Well, we've negotiated free trade agreements. In other words, we sat down with countries and said, let's get a free trade agreement in place. And we reduced barriers and tariffs through the negotiations, and there are three such agreements before the Congress. There was four; Congress recently passed a deal with Peru. And we want to do the same thing with Colombia and Panama and South Korea.

Now, for the person working here at Robinson, I don't know if you know this, but when you try to sell into Colombia, part of your—part of the helicopter parts face a 5-percent surcharge. That makes it harder to sell something in—when something is taxed, it's harder to sell into a market.

The free trade agreement we've negotiated will eliminate that surcharge. It makes it more likely that these products will be sold to Colombia and Panama. There's a 15-percent tax on the helicopter you manufacture. I've been told there's a 15-percent tax. I believe there's a 15-percent tax, and I know that a free trade agreement will reduce that tax, which means it's more likely you're going to sell a helicopter into Panama. And when you're more likely to sell a helicopter to Panama, it means you're more likely to keep work, that's what that means.

Free trade means jobs for Americans. Free trade means good-paying jobs for Americans.

And so Congress needs to pass these agreements for the sake of economic vitality. And Arnold talked about the effect for the State of California—you're selling hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of goods out of California to other parts of the world. And we need to keep that trend going. I mean, if we don't want to worry about our economy long term, you need your Government knocking down barriers to our products and on goods and services.

Congress is going to have a vote coming up pretty soon on Colombia. If it were an easy vote, I wouldn't be talking about it, but it's going to be a tough vote. Some say trade hurts our economy. These are good, decent people. I just beg to disagree—I respectfully disagree and would ask them to think about the example of this company right here. Some say it really doesn't matter. I think it matters a lot to our standing in the world as to whether or not we support a friend.

Colombia is an important country for our interests. They've got a good President, named President Uribe. And he inherited a tough deal, a tough situation, where he's fighting off drug lords and drug traffickers, people who are manufacturing drugs that come and pollute our kids. And he's taking the fight to this enemy. And he's an ally. And he wants this free trade agreement passed. It's in his country's interests.

And if we reject this opportunity to support a friend with good economic policy, if we turn down this free trade agreement, it will hurt our relations in South America. It will give the voices of false populism something to say. It is in our strategic interests that we support democracies in our neighborhood. And it's in our strategic interest and our economic interest that the United States Congress passes this free trade agreement with Colombia.

I'm looking forward to making the case for Panama and South Korea as well. The first vote coming up is Colombia. And I'm looking forward to traveling this country, talking to people about the benefits of free trade and the importance of this free trade agreement. We're also going to try to get a Doha round of trade, in other words, opening up—around the world, opening up trade.

I hope you share the same concern I have about people living in terrible poverty. You know, we're in this ideological struggle against, I called them last night "evil men," and I meant what I said. There are people that murder the innocent to achieve political objectives. And the only way they can sell their ideology is when they find hopeless people. And you can find hopeless people in places where there's no hope because the economies are sick. The best way to help people is not to give people your taxpayers' money, but to encourage enterprise through commerce and trade. So the Doha round is a great opportunity to advance prosperity around the world and deal a serious blow to those who exploit the hopeless.

The other thing about trade that I want you to know is that sometimes when trade takes place, somebody loses work, and I understand that, and that's not a happy circumstance. And the Government has a—ought to help people. One response is, okay, let's just don't trade at all, which would be bad, in my judgment. The other response is, let's have job training to help somebody get the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. It's called trade adjustment assistance, and it's a vital program.

And when you combine trade adjustment assistance with our community colleges, what you've got is a great opportunity to help people who've lost a job because of trade find the skills necessary to get a better paying job. And so for the critics who say, "Well, people lose work," my answer is, the benefits for the country as a whole are important, but we will help you, the individual, get your life back together with good education.

And finally, I want to say something about investment. It's very important for our country to be open for investment without sacrificing our national security. There's some countries around the world that have accumulated large amounts of money. Sometimes it's our money. And it makes sense to say to somebody, sure, you can invest in America. I noticed the other day one of these Wall Street firms had a big chunk of foreign money invest on their—in their balance sheet. We ought to say, you bet, absolutely, you're welcome to invest in the United States

of America. Investment means jobs and productivity increases.

Now, we're going to do it in a way that doesn't sacrifice national security. We'll analyze investments. But this Nation ought to not close our doors and be fearful. We ought to be confident because we're a great people. We've overcome problems throughout our history. There will be other problems in the future, and every time, we can overcome them.

So I appreciate you giving me a chance, Mr. Robinson, to come and visit with you. I especially was pleased to meet your employees. It's a good group of folks, highly motivated and hard-working, and they were very hospitable, and for that, the Governor and I are very grateful.

Governor, I've got my own helicopter driver, thank you. *[Laughter]* But I'm proud to be with you, and more importantly, I'm proud to be with you all. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California; Frank Robinson, president and chief executive officer, and his son, Kurt Robinson, vice president for product support, Robinson Helicopter Company; and Mayor Frank Scotto of Torrance, CA.

Remarks on the War on Terror in Las Vegas, Nevada

January 31, 2008

Thanks for the warm welcome. Thank you. So what Ranson didn't tell you is he believes in free speech, and that's what I'm here to give. *[Laughter]* I appreciate the invitation. *[Laughter]* Sharon, thank you very much as well.

I'm honored to be here with the Governor. Governor—the Governor has been a friend of mine for a long time. We served together in Washington. He came back to Nevada—*[laughter]*—to serve the great State. As my wife said, when you get over there, don't mispronounce it again. *[Laughter]* I learned my lesson. But Governor, thank you for being here. I appreciate all the State and local officials who are here, and I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come by and share

some thoughts about the world in which we live.

I do appreciate very much your advocacy of open markets, ownership. I believe the ownership society is necessary for a hopeful America. We want people owning their homes. We want people owning and managing their own health care accounts. We want people managing their pension plans. We ought to trust people. And at my State of the Union—one of the themes at the State of the Union was that government ought to trust people and empower them to make their own decisions about their future. And this institute does that, and I appreciate it very much. I thank you for being on the forefront of good, optimistic thought.

The world in which we live is a dangerous world, but a world full of great opportunity. We're involved in an ideological struggle, the likes of which we have seen before in our history. It's an ideological struggle between those of us who love freedom and human rights and human dignity and those who want to impose their dark vision on how people should live their lives. This is a—not a political conflict—I mean, a religious conflict. And I'll tell you why: Because one of the tactics—and the main tactic of those enemies of freedom—is to murder the innocent to achieve their objectives. Religious people do not murder the innocent.

And so we're facing this ideological struggle of people who use asymmetrical warfare. What distinguishes this ideological struggle from previous ideological struggles, those with—against fascism or communism, is that in this war, individuals use weapons to kill innocent people—car bombs and suicide vests. And they do so to frighten the West. They do so to create chaos and confusion. They do so with the aim of creating vacuums into which their hateful ideology can flow. And that's why you see the September 11th attacks, in London, in Madrid, in Jordan, attacks around the world. Some will say these are just isolated moments of—where all we need is a good, strong law enforcement response. I think they're all part of an ideological struggle.

And the interesting development that is taking place in the beginnings here of the